

2024 NSECE

Appendix L 2024 NSECE
Research Questions

1. What is the level of need and utilization for different types of early care and education (ECE) programs by important demographic characteristics of families and children (e.g., household income, family structure, employment status, links to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and other programs, social supports, ages of children, racial, ethnic and language minority status, non-traditional work hours, etc.)?
 - a. How are families combining parental care and/or early care and education of different types to cover the hours they need care for?
 - b. Did parental work schedules and parental unavailability for child care change before and after the COVID-19 pandemic? Did the utilization of different types of early care and education programs change before and after the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What is the availability of center- and home-based non-parental care and early education programs (both regulated and unregulated), by neighborhood, county or other geographic unit?
 - a. What are the characteristics of programs providing care and early education? How much are these characteristics determined by federal, state, and local policies and standards?
 - b. Did the availability of center- and home-based providers change before and after the COVID-19 pandemic? What are the characteristics of providers that remained in the child care market? What are the characteristics of new providers entering the child care market?
 - c. Are there differences by geography, levels of recovery post pandemic, and characteristics of populations reporting need for care for their children in the supply of care?
 - d. How does the availability and characteristics of early care and education providers compare to what was observed in 2012 and 2019, and during the COVID-19 pandemic? Has the availability of listed home-based child care changed? Has the availability of care for infants and toddlers changed?
3. How well is the availability of early care and education programs meeting the needs of parents and children-how aligned are supply and demand?
 - a. Are there differences by type of early care and education program (e.g., relationship-based home-based care in private residences, family child care, center care, faith-based providers, Head Start, public Pre-K) in the degree to which the services offered to families meet their needs and those of their children?
 - b. Is there a match between the types of care families prefer and need and the types of care available to them?
4. What are the experiences of low-income families with the subsidy system and subsidized ECE?
 - a. Which families need and want child care subsidies?
 - b. How well are programs that provide subsidies and other assistance to access ECE (e.g., Head Start, state pre-K) to working families meeting their needs?
5. What percentage of their income are families able and willing to spend in early care and education? How does affordability constrain families' use of care they want and need for their children?
6. How and why are parents making decisions about the early care and education programs they choose?
 - a. What features of programs do parents consider in choosing care?
 - b. Do parents feel that they have real choice of care?

- c. How much do parents take into account information about the quality of care available to them in choosing care and early education?
7. What motivates providers to provide ECE?
 - a. What are providers' experiences with the CCDF subsidy program?
 - b. Did the motivations of providers change before and after the COVID-19 pandemic?
8. How well aligned are the goals of programs with the wishes of parents for programs for their children?
 - a. Is there congruence between the cultural, ethnic, racial, and language characteristics of providers and the children they serve?
 - b. Did the congruence between providers and the children they serve change before and after the COVID-19 pandemic?
9. Provider decision-making: How do providers make decisions about which funding streams to pursue, how to determine enrollment capacity, and about the composition of children they choose to serve (by age, income, subsidy use, etc.)
 - a. How do providers plan for and manage enrollment? Use of waitlists?
10. What are the characteristics of the early care and education workforce (i.e., teachers, caregivers)?
 - a. What motivates teachers/caregivers to offer early care and education services?
 - b. What are the characteristics of teachers and caregivers that remained in the child care market after the COVID-19 pandemic? What are the characteristics of teachers and caregivers entering the child care market?
 - c. What are ECE workforce conditions? Job quality factors, pathways for professional growth and advancement, wellness/wellbeing, burnout levels?
11. What services do ECE providers offer to parents and children?
 - a. What are the characteristics (e.g., schedules, rules, comprehensive services) of the care they offer?
 - b. How do providers identify and respond to children of diverse language backgrounds, children with special needs, homeless families, or other specific populations?
12. How much are providers charging for ECE for children of different ages and in different kinds of programs?
 - a. What proportion of revenues from provision of ECE is covered by parent fees? What proportion is covered by other sources?
13. How do providers blend funding from different sources (e.g., child care subsidies, contracted slots, Head Start, state pre-K funding, Title I, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, other private funding) to cover the costs of serving children from households of different incomes?
 - a. How does blended funding contribute to differences across providers? How do funding sources contribute to differences within programs (e.g., variations in characteristics of the workforce in classrooms within a program)?
14. Which providers are willing and able to participate in the child care subsidy program? Which other public programs do they participate in (e.g., Child and Adult Care Food Program)?
 - a. What is their role in helping parents navigate access to child care subsidies?

- b. What are barriers to participation in subsidy programs (e.g., administrative practices, reimbursement rates)?
 - c. Do providers serving subsidized children charge fees in addition to parent co-pays? Do they waive additional fees and/or co-pays? How do providers determine parent co-pays?
15. How do predictors of quality (e.g., participation in professional development activities; use of curriculum) vary across providers (e.g., by funding sources, settings, geographic area, populations served, community characteristics)? How has the presence of predictors of quality changed post pandemic?
 - a. How do predictors of quality in classrooms (e.g., use of a curriculum, group size) compare to predictors of quality at the program-level (e.g., financial support for teacher professional development, staff departure rates)?
 - b. What is the relationship between the prices charged for providing care and predictors of quality?
16. Which providers are most likely to serve specific populations, including dual language learners, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and families who need care during non-standard hours? Do families who need care during non-standard hours have a range of choices among early care and education programs?
17. How does the availability of early care and education relate to community characteristics or characteristics of families with young children in similar geographic areas, as measured in other national surveys (e.g., The American Community Survey, The National Household Education Surveys Program)?
18. Are there differences in the characteristics of providers providing early care and education pre- and post-pandemic?
19. Recent policies (COVID R&R and Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) expansion) impact & implementation - If new (Build Back Better) ECE entitlement program and/or universal pre-kindergarten passes, what are the impacts on families access to care that meets their needs? How did providers use new funds since 2019, new quality investments, COVID relief/recovery, and CCDBG expansion funds?
20. What are the experiences of unlisted home-based providers with state ECE systems, subsidy systems? Decision-making related to participation in licensing, Quality Rating and Improvement System, subsidy system?
21. Staffing/workforce - what challenges are programs facing - recruitment, retention, training, turnover.
 - a. How do providers manage and fill staff vacancies? Do vacancies prevent you from meeting demand?
 - b. Retention strategies? Recruitment efforts? Successful strategies for retention/recruitment?
 - c. How do staffing patterns, challenges and opportunities vary by ages of children served? Program type?